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ABSTRACT

During the fall 1986 administration of the College Level Academic Skills Test (CLAST), 980 Miami-Dade Community College (MDCC) students took the exam for the first time. Of this group, 71.6% passed, and 28.4% failed one or more CLAST subtests. A study was conducted of the group of students who were required to retake one or more subtests in order to pass the exam. The study sought to determine the numbers of students who retook the exam and ultimately passed all four parts, those who retook the exam and still did not pass all four parts, and those who did not retake the exam. Data from the MDCC CLAST research file were supplemented with state CLAST data to identify students who retook the CLAST at other institutions. Study findings, which included comparisons with results from a similar study conducted in 1984, revealed the following: (1) of the 278 students who took the CLAST for the first time in fall 1986 and failed, 67.2% retook the exam at MDCC or another school during the following year and passed, and 16.2% retook it and failed again; (2) considering only MDCC testing data, the number of students who retook the CLAST increased from 66% in 1984 to 77.7% in 1986; and (3) combining the percentages of students who passed the CLAST the first time and those who passed it the second time, the ultimate pass rates were 86% for the 1984 group and 90.8% for the 1986 group. (AJL)

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A LONGITUDINAL FOLLOW-UP OF MIAMI-DADE STUDENTS WHO FAILED THE CLAST IN FALL, 1986

Research Report No. 88-03

February 1988

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A Longitudinal Follow-Up of Miami-Dade Students
Who Failed the CLAST in Fall, 1986

Introduction and Background

During the Fall, 1986 CLAST administration 980 students took the exam for the first time. Of this group, 702 (71.6%) passed the exam (defined as passing all four subtests), and 278 (28.4%) failed the exam (defined as passing three or fewer subtests). The purpose of this study was to follow the group of students who were required to retake one or more subtests in order to pass the exam across the last year, and to determine how many retook the exam and ultimately passed all four parts. The study also investigated how many retook the exam and still did not pass all four parts, and how many did not retake the exam.

Similar data were collected as part of a study following Fall, 1984 first-time test takers through Fall 1985 (Belcher, 1986). During this administration, 246 (24.7%) of the 997 first-time examinees failed the CLAST. The data for the 1984 group came from the Miami-Dade Community College (M-DCC) test master record (TMR), which contains scores from students who were examined at M-DCC or who were examined at another institution and requested that their scores be sent to M-DCC. However, it was expected that students who retook CLAST at another institution probably did not have their scores sent to M-DCC, and that the results of the study therefore underestimated the number of students who retook the test and passed. In order to address this problem, a survey was sent to the 246 students who had failed the test (with a return rate of 44%). Of these 246 students, 162 (66.0%) retook the CLAST; 35.0% passed, 31.0% failed, and 34.0% did not attempt to retake the test (according to M-DCC data). Of those who repeated the test, 53.0% passed, boosting the original 75.0% pass rate to 84.0% after one year. It was also shown that current CLAST status (defined as taking and passing the test one year later) was related to the number of subtests initially failed and which ones they were. Of those who initially failed one subtest, 73.0% had passed all four one year later. This may be compared to 19.0% of those who failed two subtests. If students who retook the essay were excluded, the passing rate would have been almost 100.0%. Considering

the results of the survey, 84.0% instead of 66.0% had retaken the test, raising the pass rate to 86.0% instead of 84.0%.

Method and Results

The data for the current study came from the M-DCC CLAST research file, which also contains CLAST scores for students who were examined at M-DCC or who were examined at another institution and requested that their scores be sent to M-DCC. Since the data from this file also underestimates the number of students who retook and passed the test, all students who did not retake the test at M-DCC were searched in the state records via the CLAST on-line score file. Using this service, which was not available in previous years, it was possible to find out if students had retaken the test at another institution, and whether or not they had passed.

Considering only the data available from the M-DCC research file, of the 278 students who wrote the CLAST for the first time and failed during Fall, 1986, 216 (77.7%) retook the CLAST during the following year; 60.1% passed, 17.6% failed, and 22.3% did not retake the exam. Of these 216 students, 167 (77.3%) passed and 49 (22.7%) failed, increasing the original pass rate from 71.6% to 88.7% after one year. Current CLAST status was again related to how many subtests were initially failed and which ones they were. Of those who initially failed one subtest, 94.9% had passed all four one year later, compared to 60.0% who failed two subtests. See Table 1 for full details.

When the data from the search of the on-line CLAST file are included, there is an increase in the proportion successfully retaking the exam. Of the 278 students who wrote the CLAST for the first time and failed during Fall, 1986, 233 (83.1%) retook the CLAST during the following year; 67.2% passed, 16.2% failed, and 16.2% did not retake the test. Of these 233 students, 188 (80.7%) passed and 45 (19.3%) failed, increasing the original passing rate from 71.6% to 90.8% after one year.

Discussion

The results may be considered from two perspectives, one comparing data from the two years that include only what was available in M-DCC records, and the second comparing results from both M-DCC data and the attempts to find out about students who retook the exam at other institutions. In both cases one sees that the number of first-time test takers failing the CLAST has increased over the years, though this has been shown to correspond with the increase in passing standards.

Considering only the M-DCC data, the number of students retaking the CLAST has increased from 66.0% for the 1984 group to 77.7% for the 1986 group. Of those students who retook the exam, 53.1% of the 1984 group passed, while 77.3% of the 1986 group passed. This raised the initial pass rate from 75.3% to 84.0% for the 1984 group, and from 71.6% to 88.7% for the 1986 group. The number of subtests initially passed had a similar influence for both groups, with those failing only one subtest having a considerably higher retake and pass rate than those failing two subtests.

When the data from the survey of the 1984 first time failers and the search of the on-line CLAST file for the 1986 first time failers are included, there is a change in the figures. The number of students retaking the CLAST remained stable at approximately 84.0% though the number of students who retook the CLAST and passed was 51.0% for the 1984 group and 80.7% for the 1986 group. With the inclusion of these additional students, the ultimate pass rate was 86.0% for the 1984 group and 90.8% for the 1986 group.

In conclusion, if looking only at M-DCC data, it appears that the number of students retaking the CLAST has increased by 17% from 1984 to 1986, there has been a 45.6% increase in the proportion of retakers who pass, and the ultimate pass rate has increased by 5.5% (i.e., from 84.0% in 1984 to 88.7% in 1986). If the data on students who retook the CLAST at other institutions are included, the number of students retaking the CLAST has remained stable, there has been a 58.2% increase in the proportion of retakers who pass, and the percentage passing has increased by 5.6% (i.e., from 86.0% in 1984 to 90.8% in 1986). From either perspective, it appears

that there is an improvement in the performance of students who retake the CLAST.

Reference

Belcher, M. J. (1986). A longitudinal follow-up of students who failed the CLAST in Fall, 1984. Research Report No. 86-20, Office of Institutional Research, Miami-Dade Community College.

Table 1

Current CLAST Status and Subtests Initially Failed*

Subtest	Retook Passed** Number	Retook Passed** Percent	Retook and Failed Number	Retook and Failed Percent	Did Not Retake Number	Did Not Retake Percent
Failed 1 Subtest						
Reading						
Fall 1984	12	87.5	1	7.1	1	7.1
Fall 1986	71	84.5	2	2.4	11	13.1
Writing						
Fall 1984	10	62.5	0	-	6	37.5
Fall 1986	4	80.0	0	-	1	20.0
Computation						
Fall 1984	2	40.0	0	-	3	60.0
Fall 1986	10	55.6	1	5.6	7	38.8
Essay						
Fall 1984	51	40.8	27	21.6	47	37.6
Fall 1986	34	63.0	4	7.4	16	29.6
Subtotal						
Fall 1984	75	46.9	28	17.5	57	35.6
Fall 1986	129	75.4	7	4.1	35	20.5
Failed 2 Subtests						
Reading/Writing						
Fall 1984	0	-	2	50.0	2	50.0
Fall 1986	12	75.0	1	6.3	3	18.8
Reading/Computation						
Fall 1984	0	-	1	100.0	0	-
Fall 1986	12	46.2	11	42.3	3	11.5
Reading/Essay						
Fall 1984	6	18.2	18	54.5	9	27.3
Fall 1986	13	48.2	11	40.7	3	11.1
Writing/Computation						
Fall 1984	0	-	0	-	0	-
Fall 1986	0	-	0	-	1	100.0
Writing/Essay						
Fall 1984	2	9.1	12	54.6	8	36.4
Fall 1986	4	57.1	2	28.6	1	14.3
Computation/Essay						
Fall 1984	0	-	1	50.0	1	50.0
Fall 1986	0	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Subtotal						
Fall 1984	8	12.9	34	54.8	20	32.3
Fall 1986	41	50.0	27	32.9	14	17.1
Failed 3 Subtests						
Reading/Writing/Computation						
Fall 1984	0	-	1	100.0	0	-
Fall 1986	2	50.0	1	25.0	1	25.0
Reading/Writing/Essay						
Fall 1984	3	23.1	8	61.5	2	15.4
Fall 1986	0	-	6	66.7	3	33.3
Reading/Computation/Essay						
Fall 1984	0	-	2	50.0	2	50.0
Fall 1986	3	23.1	5	38.5	5	38.5
Writing/Computation/Essay						
Fall 1984	0	-	1	100.0	0	-
Fall 1986	0	-	0	-	1	100.0
Subtotal						
Fall 1984	3	15.8	12	63.2	4	21.0
Fall 1986	5	18.5	12	44.4	10	37.1
Failed 4 Subtests						
Reading/Writing/Computation/Essay						
Fall 1984	0	-	2	40.0	3	60.0
Fall 1986	2	25.0	3	37.5	3	37.5
Totals						
Fall 1984***	86	35.0	76	30.9	84	34.1
Fall 1986***	167	60.1	49	17.6	62	22.3
Fall 1984****	105	42.7	101	41.1	40	16.3
Fall 1986*****	188	67.6	45	16.2	45	16.2

*Figures for Fall, 1984 is based on M-DCC data only. Figures for 1986 are based on both M-DCC and Statewide data.

**Passed is defined as passing all four subtests.

***Based on M-DCC data only.

****Based on M-DCC and survey data.

*****Based on M-DCC and statewide data.

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